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Book Review!

Literary Guidepost

A Most Private Intrigue. By
Leo Rosten. Atheneum. \$5.95.

The versatile and ubiquitous
Rosten is known for a compre-
hensive variety of nonfiction,
but mainly for his humorous
fiction — the Hyman Kaplan
stories and "Captain Newman,
MD."

Now he has ventured into the
currently popular field of inter-
national intrigue and suspense,
and has come up with a fast,
zippy tale that is very likely to
rank with the best efforts of
the suspense specialists.

His hero is Peter Galton,
once an intelligence agent who
fell from official grace when
one of his projects in East Ber-
lin was betrayed, and now a
private agent for a nongovern-
ment organization.

Suddenly a bizarre specimen
of the greedy international
manipulator and smuggling set,
a Turk named Sulenkian, turns
up with an offer to deliver (for
one million dollars) three sci-
entists who have disappeared
at various times into the hands
of the Russians. One of them is
a woman. Remembering her
from East Berlin, Galton be-
comes especially interested.

Sulenian's operation leads to
Istanbul, but one of his hire-
lings unexpectedly turns fanat-
ic and commits a murder,
which blows the whole scheme
sky high and leaves the sci-
entists suspended in mid-rescue
at the Russian port of Odessa.

Galton decides to carry the
mission through, almost single-
handed, with only a little lift
from the CIA, which has been
keeping tabs on him just in case
his private operation should
mess up its own interests.

All good suspense stories
need some startling plot
switches, a bit of gunplay and
hand-to-hand mayhem, a dis-
guise or two, a chase and es-
cape, and the spice of exotic
scenes and characters — and
Rosten's whip-cracking tale en-
compasses all these ingredients.
He hasn't forgotten the roman-
tic element either, and he
makes it more plausible than
in most examples of his genre.

In short, expert storyteller
Rosten, in his first shot at the
private spy adventure, has
come up with a first-rate daz-
zler.

Miles A. Smith

SMITH, MILES A.

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INTRIGUE

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